

NEARER THE TITLE

BARKING 1, WYCOMBE WDRS 1

CLOSER and closer, Wycombe Wanderers creep to their first Isthmian League title since 1956-57 . . . and now they're closest yet, after taking a point from Barking at Vicarage Field on Friday evening.

The East Londoners, themselves wielding an outside chance of honours this season, offered a great threat to the Wanderers, for they also have yet to visit Loakes Park on May 2.

So Wanderers can feel more than pleased that they fought back for a point. Barking, however, had it within their powers to withold that point, making and missing a number of chances before the interval.

For 90 minutes, Wycombe's deputy 'keeper, Kevin O'Brien, looked disappointingly suspect in the air before partially making amends with some brave low level diving to recover the situation.

But, the visitors' defence, one of the safest in the competition, was well upto it's task as Barking's attack exerted early pressure.

Wycombe skipper, John Delaney cleared after O'Brien had mishandled Wilsonham's corner kick in the 25th minute, but soon after, Wycombe hit back.

The visitors' shooting power came to the fore, with Horseman first into the fray with an opening shot. Although the ball whizzed wide of goal and into a

strong Wycombe contingent behind the Barking net, it showed the East Londoners what they were up against.

And seconds later Horseman again confirmed their fears with a pass for Barry Baker to bring the best from 'keeper, Hadlow.

Two minutes before half time, Barking eventually took the lead. Winger Derek Baker sent over a high cross from the left touchline. At first it seemed to elude everyone inside the Wanderers area, but wing half John Ford stormed through from behind to slam the ball into goal.

But the point-saver did come after 54 minutes when Lailey punted the ball upfield to Tony Horseman to round Jones and shoot into goal.

WYCOMBE: O'Brien; Rundle, Gale; Suddaby, Delaney, Lailey; Anthony, (sub. Blunt 76th min), Baker, Searle, Horseman, Hutchinson.